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acumen

The magazine of Lehigh University's College of Arts and Sciences

Ulysses Dreams

Cyber Sufis

The Right Key

Unequal Exchange

AT 20 YEARS:

Africana Studies
Ascendant

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ARTS & SCIENCES



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Message from the Dean



Promoting an Interdisciplinary Dialogue

This issue of the magazine explores interdisciplinary education and its impact on CAS students and alumni

Welcome to the fall semester and latest edition of *Acumen*. Putting these issues together presents a wonderful challenge, as we select which stories to include. The college remains a vibrant hub of activity, and students are exposed to a wide variety of scholarship through talented, energized faculty.

The College of Arts and Sciences is sharpening its message about what it uniquely offers Lehigh students. At a time when some

would call for education to center on specialization and narrow vocational training, we believe that solving the world's problems means exploring the complexity of challenges, discussing vigorously and then working to bridge differences of belief, background and disciplinary perspective. As the core of a Lehigh education, the College of Arts and Sciences provides a learning environment that engages students with faculty who are not only driving the intellectual expansion of their disciplines, but are also eager to explore disciplinary intersections. In the end, students gain a better understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the social, scientific and cultural challenges that we face globally. All undergraduates who complete their degrees with a major from the college have a broad education that equips them for success in their personal, civic and professional lives. Their course work is increasingly interdisciplinary, as we help students develop a deep knowledge in major fields of interest and hone skills in writing, critical thinking and research techniques. In our teaching and research, our best work is driven by, and honed through, participation in an expansive dialogue, one that welcomes diverse opinions and differing viewpoints and that leads to enhanced understanding.

Our faculty possess the flexibility of mind that helps students continue their intellectual growth and makes them employable in a changing economy. Inside you will discover Edurne Portela, who has shaped the Humanities Center into a model environment for interdisciplinary projects. The university also has encouraged our efforts, as evidenced by the latest hiring of faculty whose research is focused on Africana Studies and whom you will meet in this issue. These new faculty draw students like Nadia Sasso, who cofounded an organization to improve maternal and infant mortality in Sierra Leone.

An American Studies student, she is exploring the culture and identity of African immigrants. Therese Mejia's story reminds us of what is possible at Lehigh. Mejia, a Global Studies major, has made the most of the college's approach to interdisciplinary learning to find her place in the world and a personal path for the future. Our graduates also make the most of the interdisciplinarity found in the college, alumni like Peter Scott '87 '88. Peter took his degrees in English and arts-engineering and went on to a distinguished career in investment banking.

By promoting interdisciplinary dialogue, a successful college of arts and sciences creates strong values by upholding respect for diverse perspectives and a commitment to civil discourse, ones that we want graduates to exemplify as they participate with curiosity and self-awareness in their professional lives, in their engagement with the arts and in society more generally. I am continually excited and energized by the faculty, staff and students within the college who are committed to interdisciplinary learning. I invite you



to learn more about how alumni can play a role in these types of programs. As Lehigh alumni, you can help shape the future of today's, and tomorrow's, students.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts and comments.

Donald E. Hall
Herbert and Ann Siegel Dean

The Arts

Architecture

Bartram's Boxes Remix

Furniture maker Amy Forsyth's work blurs the boundaries between furniture, sculpture, architecture, and performance. She uses whatever means and materials will realize the initial idea. Her creations combine the unconventional with the familiar, taking everyday objects and turning them into something unexpected. Her latest project is a collaborative effort with an Indiana-based artist to design and build furniture for a 2014 exhibition at Philadelphia's The Center for Art in Wood.

As part of the center's Bartram's Boxes Remix (BBR), Forsyth, associate professor of architecture in the department of art, architecture and design, is working with Katie Hudnall, an assistant professor and furniture maker at Herron School of Art and Design, Indianapolis, to build two pieces of furniture that will engage each other.

BBR is a collaborative project between the center and Bartram's Garden, home of Philadelphia's 18th-century explorer and botanist John Bartram. The project references the boxes containing seeds, plants and curiosities that Bartram began sending to his colleagues in England in 1735.

Reflecting Bartram's mail-order business, Forsyth and Hudnall began planning their furniture in 2012.

Each designer sent the other drawings and small sculptural objects to inspire larger pieces. Over the course of this past spring, they met and drew what they thought these ideas might become.

Forsyth works mostly with wood, building furniture that tends to be sculptural. For the exhibit, she built a cabinet that she describes as a self-portrait. The cabinet doors



incorporate truss-like wooden hinges inspired by Hudnall, with doors that reference Native American transformation masks. Inside is a table built from one of Hudnall's drawings. Since this project is for an exhibition rather than everyday use, expressing an idea is more important than function, Forsyth says.

"I'm not interested in furniture that's been done already, like Arts and Crafts. I think it's wonderful stuff, but I approach my work as an artistic practice, so I'm always looking for something new."

Every piece is different, and she often works with found objects. Each design is specific to the need she sees. Recently, Forsyth built a table for musicians playing jam sessions. The table has built-in instrument racks to hold instruments when musicians are not playing.

"It makes it a sculptural piece, but it's also functional. It's specific to the people who will use it and to their activities."

Forsyth, who is also a musician, plays improvisatory material and says her approach to music is akin to her approach to furniture design.

"As an architect, you plan everything out and you hope someone will build it just the way you draw it. As a furniture maker, I like the fact that I am doing it myself, and I learn something about what I'm making as I go. When I play a solo, I don't have a preconception of what I'm going to play. I feel my way through it in the same way I do when I create furniture, and it becomes a wonderful discovery."



Music

Building on the Right Note

For pianist and conductor Eugene Albulescu, touring with chamber orchestras and performing pieces written for harpsichord present logistical challenges. He requires an instrument that can travel easily with him on tours. Albulescu found the answer in the shop of an internationally renowned harpsichord maker on Bethlehem's South Side.

The harpsichord is central to music of the Baroque era in music. Albulescu, associate professor of music and R.J. Ulrich Endowed Chair in Orchestral Studies, examines the Baroque period, when the "continuo" practice was in its heyday. With Baroque scores, the harpsichordist played not only what was written, but he would also add elements to the music.

"It's kind of like an early version of jazz notation," he says. "The keyboardist would play more than was written. [The other musicians] would match the style, but the harpsichord player had the most freedom in many ways because his part was the only one that was not fully written. It was hinted at. He was the one who glued the ensemble together."

In searching for an instrument, Albulescu came across Willard Martin, who has built some 600 harpsichords over his career. Martin



seeds from me
by Amy Forsyth

knew of a harpsichord illustration that appears in a book by Marin Mersenne, *L'Harmonie Universelle* (1637), a diagram with excellent dimensions and detail. He used the illustration to create a blueprint for overall dimensions, calling it a Mersenne. From these drawings, Albulescu set out to build a harpsichord, with help from Martin. Funded in part by Lehigh's Gipsen Institute, the instrument took two years to build.

"The amazing thing about this instrument is it's just 50 pounds, so with a proper cover, you can check it in as luggage when you fly," he says.

Albulescu showcased his harpsichord at an orchestra performance last February, performing Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6*.

"It has a very big sound, so we had to put the lid down," says Albulescu, who is also music director of the Lehigh University Philharmonic.



Eugene Albulescu

There are two ways to play a harpsichord, flap open or closed. It is often played flap closed, but Albulescu needed the flap up to accommodate sheet music. Because of travel demands, he decided to paint only the lid's bottom and engaged the talents of his wife, Linda Ganus, orchestra coordinator and flute faculty, who is also an artist. Ganus painted a depiction of Orpheus taming the animals, as Orphic themes are often found in harpsichords of that era. She painted the scene so the vanishing

point accommodates the lid and each section is an individual work of art that compliments the other.

"In my field, it's very useful to understand the technology, and what I love about working at Lehigh is our tradition of finding out how things work. It inspires your art or your skill or your craft," Albulescu says. "This harpsichord is from an era where you had to understand how it worked. I find building the instrument the ultimate in being in touch with the technology because you have to understand every aspect of it, from moving parts to the combination of wood and metal. It changes your perspective on how to make music on it."

Theatre

Ulysses Dreams

Ulysses, the ancient Roman equivalent of the Greek *Odysseus*, was a legendary Greek king of Ithaca and hero of Homer's *Odyssey*. A retelling of the legend, and the vision of Augustine Ripa and the Touchstone Ensemble, *Ulysses Dreams* premiered in April at the Touchstone Theatre.

Ulysses Dreams began as a project Ripa envisioned with William George '73, who is the co-founder and an ensemble member of Touchstone Theatre, as a staging of the epic poem.

"The more the ensemble thought about it, it started to head in a new direction, and it ended with something wonderful," Ripa says.

Performed in an amphitheater in the form of a song cycle, Touchstone's approach to the story finds Ulysses near the end of his life and reflecting on his journey. The play deals with Ulysses' character and his relationship with the various women in his life, from his mother's care for him in childhood, to the nymphs and goddesses who trouble him on his journey home, to his loving wife, Penelope,

waiting patiently for his return. The production innovatively weaves text, live music, expressive movement and costuming in an outdoor, almost ceremonial, setting.

"Most of the plays I direct are with undergraduate students. I love the teaching that takes place with the students, but it's also very rewarding to be a full, equal



Ulysses Dreams was performed in an amphitheater behind Touchstone Theatre on the Bethlehem Greenway.

The movement pieces weren't literal; they were more interpretive, says Ripa, professor of theatre. Ulysses describes each scene in an evocative, dreamlike way, followed by a band playing music as actors physicalize the essence of what had been said.

"It's like this Marc Chagall, abstract dream logic. It was this kind of puppet theatre, street theatre roots that Touchstone Theatre emerged from years ago."

Ripa served as co-creator, knitting together the separate elements of music, movement and speech, and helped the group envision a unified totality, a unified work.

"I've worked with this theatre for many years, and I think we got back to Touchstone's roots with this piece, this idea that Touchstone is a movement-based theatre that values the beauty of movement," he says.

Ripa notes that his work in professional theatre transfers to his work in the classroom.

co-collaborator with an equally seasoned professional actor. Most everything I've directed outside Lehigh has been an original piece, and I really like the idea of being a co-creator. In this case, everyone brought a piece of the creation to the process."

In 1999, Ripa directed *The Voice of Souls* at Touchstone. *The Voice of Souls* is a phrase from Shakespeare's *Sonnet 69*, and based on that experience, he is teaching a freshman seminar this semester called *Sonnets Alive*, which is based directly on the work he did at Touchstone staging sonnets with evocative ensemble movement.

"I see a direct connection between the work that I direct outside Lehigh and the pioneering teaching I get to do when I return to my Lehigh students," Ripa says. "For me, this represents a compelling intersection of scholarship and pedagogy—the scholarship feeding the teaching and enriching both the field and our students."

English

Imoinda's Shade

"When we think of British anti-slavery and abolitionist arguments, we think of black and white men," says Lyndon Dominique, assistant professor of English. In my work, however, "I look at the way in which black women are used to champion these arguments."

This is an unusual approach to take within his field of literary study since the 18th century lacks prose fictions and plays written by African women. As such, critics assume that African women had little to no collective impact on British literature and the national consciousness of the period. Yet, Dominique finds that these assumptions are contradicted by the influence of one pervasive African woman featured in the century's literary texts.

In his book, *Imoinda's Shade: Marriage and the African Woman in Eighteenth-Century British Literature, 1759-1808*, Dominique examines representations of African women in late-18th-century British literature by using, as a touchstone, two versions of the same African female literary character. Writer Aphra Behn first created Imoinda, a young African princess sold into the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as a black woman in her novel *Oroonoko* (1688). In 1696, however, Thomas Southerne reinterpreted Imoinda for the stage as a white African woman in a popular dramatic version of Behn's novel. Dominique argues that late-18th-century British writers were collectively influenced by these early black and white depictions of Imoinda, and they used various aspects of each of Imoinda's characterizations in texts written



during the height of the antislavery and abolitionist period that feature prominent African women.

"They were using her as the archetype," he says. "I found so many connections; people who were writing these antislavery plays and novels had Imoinda in mind in some shape or form, based on the plot details of the narratives."

Examining texts from 1759 to 1808, Dominique found that Imoinda and her involvement in the *Oroonoko* marriage plot were deliberately transformed and embellished for politicized ends during this period. Where *Oroonoko*, as a tragedy, marks a time when literature actively embodies the negative social perception of slavery, Imoinda and the fictional African women created in her image were deliberately employed in marriage plots created by progressive writers to popularize antislavery issues involving rape, gynecological rebellion and miscegenation. Imoinda should be considered a major collective presence in British novels and dramas written well beyond the late Restoration

period in which she initially appeared, says Dominique, who also teaches in the Africana Studies program.

"If one looks at the issue of slavery and abolition through the lens of Imoinda, some radical things are being said. Imoinda and the characters created in her image are representations of the possibility of freedom—freedom to live, to marry, to rebel and to immigrate to a free state."

This emphasis on freedom connects Dominique's work with the contemporary field of Black British Studies. Usually thought of as an exclusively 20th-century phenomenon, Dominique believes that our current understanding of Black Britishness must be

expanded to include these literary African women of *Imoinda's Shade* who are depicted in white-authored texts as immigrating to England and using English soil as a basis for their social advocacy of freedom.

"These early, white-influenced literary depictions of Black British immigration and citizenship advocacy are just as important to our understanding of the field of Black British Studies as are black 20th-century literal depictions of the same things."

Religion Studies

Cyber Sufis

As an Islamicist and a South Asianist, Rob Rozehnal has focused on the history and practice of Islam within Pakistan and India, with a particular emphasis on Islamic mysticism (Sufism). His research will now take a new path, exploring cyberspace as an alternative platform for communication and community building among diverse groups of American Muslims.

Supported by a New Directions Fellowship, Rozehnal's project will combine textual analysis with ethnographic field work to chart the theological, geographical and cultural diversity of prominent Sufi orders in the United States. Rozehnal, associate professor of religion studies and director of Lehigh's Center for Global Islamic Studies, plans to conduct field work among prominent Sufi communities to document how the current generation of American Muslims uses the Internet to expand networks, rethink tradition and refashion identity. Rozehnal will interview Sufi webmasters and Sufi web users to chart how they access these new digital spaces for social networking, identity politics, PR, polemics and piety.

"I am interested in how the Internet opens new doors to new



Rob Rozehnal will document how American Sufi communities use cyberspace to expand networks, rethink tradition and refashion identity within American religious life.

audiences,” he says. “In many ways, cyberspace represents a profound challenge to these Muslim groups. Traditionally, Sufism is all about a personal connection with a spiritual teacher. In the absence of that direct, face-to-face connection on the ground, is it possible to create a religious community online? Are chat rooms useful for spiritual learning? Can a Web page ever replace that one-on-one connection with a spiritual master? Can you have a virtual Shaykh? My sense is these American Sufi groups are reluctant to change the dynamics of their teaching traditions. But as technology progresses, can virtual environments become real places for conversation, for social interaction or for religious experience?”

In many ways, cyberspace presents interesting challenges for Rozehnal’s research methodology.

“I approach Web pages as a distinct genre of religious text that can be read, interpreted and critiqued. At the same time, these are very fluid and mobile spaces. The Web is constantly shape-shifting. A Web page may be gone in a month or continuously changing day to day. The speed and movement of hyperlinked, digital spaces present a real challenge to our understanding of religious texts—and demands a retooling of our scholarly methods of analysis.”

Rozehnal’s interest in the Internet is partly the product of a course he has taught at Lehigh: *Digital Dharma: Asian Religions Online*. “When I started to teach the class, I realized there’s some really sophisticated, interesting stuff going on online,” he says. “The Internet is obviously central to the everyday lives of Lehigh students. In the class, I try to help them develop the critical skills needed to interpret and analyze the chaos and complexity of religious life online. It’s the Wild West out there, but cyberspace offers a fascinating perspective on

the rich tapestry of American religious life in the 21st century.”

From this research, Rozehnal will publish a book with Oneworld Publications (Oxford, England) that he hopes will shed new light into Muslim life in America, both online and “on the ground.” He also anticipates creating a new course to introduce digital religion and cyberspace Islam to Lehigh’s undergraduate students.

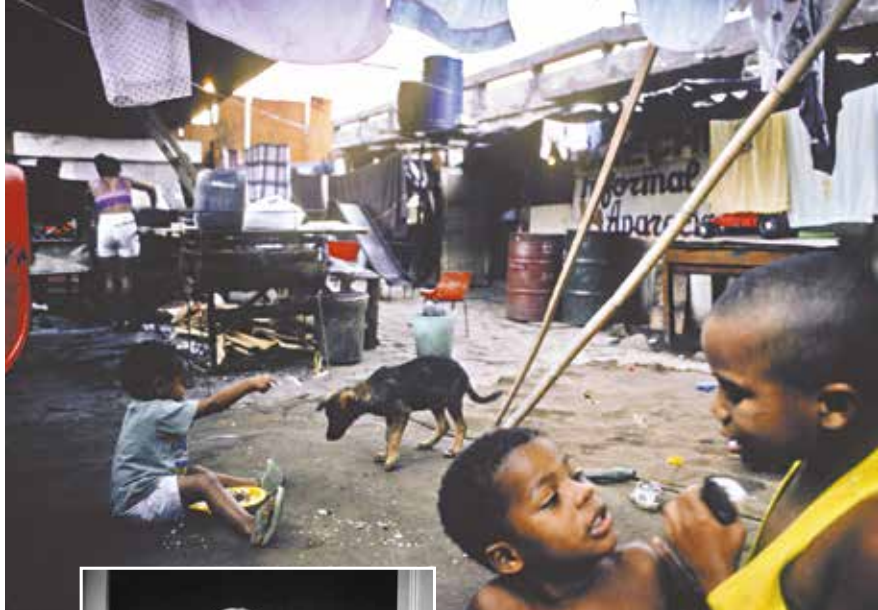
Modern Languages and Literature

Melodrama as Political Narrative

Historically, melodrama has been viewed as a conservative genre that celebrates the status quo. But Matthew Bush finds that the form is also used to express radical narrative or to celebrate revolutionary politics.

Bush, assistant professor of Spanish in the department of modern languages and literature, examines the work of authors who use melodrama—an aesthetic form and narrative structure that affectively appeals to readers—to express the political and social issues of the time. The author of the forthcoming book *Pragmatic Passions: Melodrama and Latin American Social Narrative*, he examines melodramas written in the first half of the 20th century, particularly from the Latin American countries of Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil and Argentina.

In his book, Bush offers melodrama as a central aesthetic that marked various literary genres across the Latin American canon. Melodrama is often used to address societal problems, such as regional differences in Venezuela or social



Jorge Amado

marginality in urban Argentina. Bush argues that using this aesthetic can help explain things that are highly politically complicated or that don’t occur in a unified manner. “Melodrama attempts to represent a specific reality and a path to do something about it,” he says. The complication is that melodrama, even when its message is emotionally clear to the public, often leaves loose ends to its stories.

Bush, who is also director of the Latin American Studies program, notes that many of the authors who use melodramatic aesthetics invert the scheme. People who are typically viewed as “bad” because they upset a society’s traditional power structure are instead portrayed as “good” because they are represented as idyllic models of social rebellion.

“Melodrama can be quite radical when it’s used toward

different ends,” Bush says. “I see it as a pervasive mode of trying to put a frame on things that are difficult to conceptually encapsulate.”

Bush’s work focuses on prominent Latin American writers such as Argentinian author Roberto Arlt, Brazilian author Jorge Amado, Mexican novelist and essayist Carlos Fuentes, Peruvian poet and author César Vallejo and Venezuelan novelist Rómulo Gallegos. The works he examines are inherently political as they aim to navigate some of the most daunting social issues in their respective nations.

“Because Latin America is so heterogeneous in its cultural and social makeup, each novel is an attempt to negotiate cultural and political identities, to come out of it with some idea of this is who we are and this is where we need to go,” Bush says.

As this project draws to a close, Bush is now moving to the opposite end of the spectrum, as his new research will look at abstraction in contemporary Latin American painting, photography, film, television and literature. “It doesn’t give us clear definitions and differs from the way that melodrama attempts to organize all the necessary information,” he says. He will be investigating how abstract works that are often ostensibly perceived as nonpolitical can be viewed as forms to engage the public in a different way and make them aware of the processes that go into artistic production and social practice.

Biological Sciences

Improving Learning Potential

In the human brain, the cholinergic system is a modulatory neurotransmitter system involved in a variety of brain processes, including learning and memory, attention and motor processes, among others. Neuroscientist Julie Miwa examines the regulation of this system through the *lynx1* gene and its impact on learning.

"In animals, there are changes that occur in the brain as we age, and *lynx1* turns on at this transition point when we have this shift from robust learning ability to when it becomes less robust," says Miwa, assistant professor of biological sciences.

Lynx genes are toxin-like proteins that form tight associations with specialized proteins in the brain called nicotinic acetylcholine receptors. *Lynx1* acts as a molecular brake over the cholinergic system, limiting cognition and suppressing neural plasticity after a period of vigorous plasticity early in postnatal development. Those

Generating genetically engineered mice, Miwa's research focuses on regulating the cholinergic system to control the plasticity of the brain. Mice lacking the *lynx1* gene have improved learning ability. In the cholinergic system, along a gradient of activation—and within this gradient—there is an optimal window of activation-optimized cholinergic tone, within which it has a variety of pro-cognitive effects. The cholinergic system is increasingly prized as a driving force for neural plasticity as well.

One of the discoverers of the *lynx* modulators of nicotinic acetylcholine receptors, she has teamed with colleague Amber Rice to study birds to find subtle sequence differences in the gene that might confer better or worse learning potential.

"If we can find these differences and link it to learning, we might be able to use this strategy with humans to see if this gene confers better or worse learning potential. If we devise ways to inhibit *lynx1*, it may be possible to bring back the youthful learning capability in humans. This could be particularly useful for neuropsychiatric disorders in which patients exhibit symptoms as adults, past the age when it is feasible to correct imbalances that happened early in life."

A better understanding of this gene could result in better therapies for people who have learning disabilities or suffer from Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia or stroke.

Chemistry

A Better Catalyst

Research in organometallic chemistry involves using transition metals to manipulate the chemical bonds of organic molecules in order to transform the organics into higher-value products. David Vivic employs a mix of focused exploratory chemistry, catalyst screening and computational studies to unravel how



Copper (above) is one of the metals being studied by Vivic's lab.

different metal/scaffold platforms could be used to either improve known reactions or carry out their own unique transformations.

Many modern processes used to make industrially important molecules employ rare and expensive metal catalysts like palladium and rhodium. Vivic, professor of chemistry, is trying to understand how to control the reactivity of more earth-abundant and environmentally benign metals like copper, nickel and iron in order to carry out similar transformations.

"The price of rhodium is about 600 times more expensive than nickel, and far more compared to iron, so there is big motivation for learning how to control the reactivity of base metals," Vivic notes.

A metal-mediated transformation of particular interest to the Vivic lab involves replacing certain hydrogens in organic molecules with fluorine. Fluorination can increase the chemical and thermal stability of organic molecules. The Teflon surface of a nonstick frying pan is largely fluorinated, as are special gaskets and seals that could withstand corrosive conditions.

Vivic adds that fluorination is also important to the drug industry. "Pharmaceutical companies have an interest because they can replace some hydrogen atoms in drugs with fluorine to make them last longer in the body so they can get to their targets without decomposing."

The stabilizing properties of

fluorine, however, can also be a hindrance when it comes to developing new ways to prepare organofluorines because fluorine also makes the metal catalyst super stable and less reactive, says Vivic.

"Many of the metal-catalyzed transformations that happen with normal organic substrates are slow with fluorinated ones. We're trying to figure out why and what we can do to the metal environment to improve catalysis."

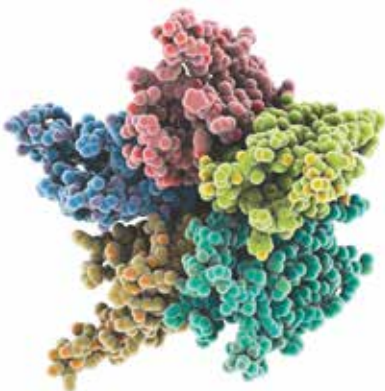
In this vein for his DOE-funded research, the Vivic lab has been preparing well-defined fluorine-containing organometallic complexes to see how they can be coaxed into targeted reactivity patterns.

Earth and Environmental Sciences

Peatlands and Global Warming

Global peatlands store large amounts of carbon within a few meters of the atmosphere, and the peatland-atmosphere carbon exchange is of major interest to global change scientists, including Zicheng Yu.

Yu, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences, takes an interdisciplinary approach to his research, which centers on the late Quaternary paleoecology and paleoclimatology. He uses informa-



Molecular model showing the structure of a nicotinic acetylcholine receptor with a closed central pore.

receptors can facilitate learning and memory. In adults, however, *lynx1* binds to those receptors and clamps or inhibits this neurotransmitter system and dynamic learning.

tion stored in peatlands and lake sediments to study the dynamics of vegetation, climate, hydrology and carbon cycle and their connections.

Yu is breaking ground with his research. Working this summer on Alaska's North Slope, Yu and his team extracted soil core samples, each up to a few meters deep. Scientists want to know what will happen in the underlying layers of peat as the climate gets warmer. The approach is to examine geo-historical records, make observations and understand how peatland carbon responded to warming climate in

Beyond his work in Alaska, Yu has conducted research in the Tibetan Plateau, Patagonia and Kamchatka, Russia. Yu's work last summer in Kamchatka developed the first carbon accumulation record of peatlands there. Along with collaborators at University of Hawaii and Bowdoin College, as well as Lehigh postdoctoral fellow Julie Loisel and others, he is synthesizing data across the Arctic to create a detailed view of how carbon responded to past warming periods, as far back as 10,000 years. Funded by the National Science Foundation, Yu will travel to Antarctica in February to examine how peat responds to climate change.

By using paleoecological information resulting from lake and wetland sediments, he is reconstructing past changes and determining environmental influences on upland and wetland vegetation. Reconstructed change from these paleoecological records, together with independent information on climate from oxygen isotopes and on soil/landscape development, provides valuable data in discussing past ecosystem processes related to climate-soil-vegetation interactions.

Yu's research is providing critical information regarding climate change.

the past, which can be used to infer what will happen in the future.

"We've found that peatlands are happier when it's warmer," he says. "They accumulate carbon rapidly under a warmer climate, but they need to be wet, as the warming may make the climate drier and the peat bogs suffer."

Yu speculates that peatlands will expand in a warmer climate, despite suffering along the southern edge of northern peatlands due to a drier climate. The challenge is to determine the overall balance for the next 100 years, as some peatlands release carbon while others capture more carbon from the atmosphere.

used because programmers can use shorter key lengths. Using elliptic curves, Dodson also finds medium-sized prime factors.

In cryptography, key size is measured in bits of the key used in a cryptographic algorithm. Pay your credit card bill online and your computer needs a key to access the bank's site. This key is encrypted using a combination of a private key and a public key. The key pair is based on prime numbers of long length. This makes the system extremely secure, because there is an infinite number of prime numbers available. Dodson uses factoring to decipher these keys.

"Anybody can use a basic computer to factor numbers, but this is one of those hard problems," he says. "The common sense thing, run through primes one by one, can't possibly work to break these codes

because there are too many prime numbers. The number of primes you would need to check is more than the number of atoms in the universe. It's not a viable option."

Factoring numbers with 155 digits, Dodson was able to break the 512-bit security code in 1999. He seeks the calculation that will crack the next level of network security. Using a network of computers, 768 bits, or 233 digits, has been deciphered. 1024-bit encryption should be two primes with lengths of bits, but a product of four primes of 256 bits has just been broken, Dodson says.

"The method used elliptic curves, for factoring," he says.

When 1024-bits is broken, everyone will switch to 2048-bits, which is secure but very expensive. The alternative is to use elliptic curves for encryption, Dodson says.

Mathematics

The Right Key

Ordering a book, a CD, or accessing your bank online, requires entering sensitive personal information. Online security relies on encryption; the process of encoding information in such a way that only the person (or computer) with the key can decode it. Decoding this information is the focus of work by cryptographer Bruce Dodson.

Dodson, associate professor of mathematics, is working on encryption employing elliptic curve cryptography. Elliptic curve cryptography is based on the algebraic structure of elliptic curves over finite fields. Elliptic curves are





Girls of the German League under a motto 'nation helps itself.'

History

The Philosophy of Life and Death

As the Nazis came to power during the 1920s, they understood the importance of language to direct the populace. They drew into their inner circle writers who espoused the power of the German vocabulary of *Leben* (life) to ordinary men and women. This *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life) and the writings of one of its most prominent exponents, Ludwig Klages, is the focus of Nitzan Lebovic.

Lebovic, assistant professor of history, finds the significance of Klages' tremendous popularity at a time of political instability, during the Weimar Republic, fascinating. It was this volatility that permitted the rise of Nazism.

In his recently published book, *The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of Nazi Biopolitics*, Lebovic examines the roots of Nazi rhetoric based on *Lebensphilosophie*. He follows the movement's history in order to understand how it was incorporated into the Nazi ideology, speech-making and politics. He

traces the ideology back to the late 19th century, where it had little to do with a specific ideology, to the 1920s and the Second World War. He examines the gradual politicization of Klages' philosophy and how the Nazis took his words and made them their own.

Lebovic, who also holds the Helene and Allen Apter Chair in Holocaust Studies and Ethical Values in the Berman Center for Jewish Studies, was granted special access to German records, information that is scheduled to remain closed to the public until 2046.

"No one has done the history where these words come from and why the Nazis were attracted to them," says Lebovic. "Most historians just want to know what the Nazis did. Philosophers want to know the philosophy, but nobody brought these things together. It's only if you are interdisciplinary with your approach that you can see why these worlds touch and why they are being used in different ways at different times."

Lebovic adds that the history of German life-philosophy stands at the center of contemporary debates, where terms like

"life-form," "better life" or the "governing of life" have become a standard political category.

"The earlier roots of *Lebensphilosophie* have risen again and point out the relevance of such categories to our contemporary understanding of democracy."

Psychology

Memory Reconsolidation

One of the challenges for cognitive neuroscience is to explain how memories change over time. Memories do not provide a perfect record of the past and can be altered long after acquisition. The dynamic nature of memory probably allows us to update existing knowledge as we gather new information. Understanding the circumstances of memory change has important implications for public and private areas of life.

Almut Hubbach, assistant professor of psychology, studies memory reconsolidation, a process that can alter long-term memories. Hubbach and her colleagues have shown that, upon reactivation, memories enter a fragile state that allows for the incorporation of new information into existing memory. She points out that memory can be

activated with fairly subtle reminders, such as spatial surroundings.

"Any form of modification is theoretically possible. Memories can be impaired or enhanced, or new information can be added to existing knowledge. Critically, memory updating depends on the strength of the memory. Very strong memories, such as traumatic experiences, are difficult to update," she says.

Working with researchers at Princeton University, Hubbach used an MRI scanner to examine whether the extent of memory reactivation during new learning predicts the amount of memory updating. While participants were in the scanner, they learned a set of simple object images interspersed with random scene images. After 48 hours, participants returned to the scanner and were reminded of the first session. Immediately afterward, they were given a second set of object images to learn, but critically this time, no scenes were presented. This allowed the researchers to use the participants' neural activity for scene processing in Session 2 as an indicator of Set 1 memory reactivation. In a final memory test that was administered another 48 hours later, it was found that the more participants thought back to Session 1 during Session 2

(i.e., the more scene activity was detected), the more Set 2 objects were incorporated into Set 1 memory, demonstrating that the extent of updating depends on the extent of reactivation.

Recently, Hubbach has begun to investigate how reactivated memories react to stress. Her results suggest that reactivation itself can enhance memories but that this enhancement is taken away if reactivation is followed by stress.



International Relations

Third-Party Intervention

Intervention became an important foreign policy issue following the end of the Cold War because more political energy could be dedicated to issues other than the superpower confrontation, and several bloody civil and ethnic conflicts, like the ones in the Balkans and Rwanda, added to its urgency. Many argued then, and continue to argue today, that violence against minorities

more intervention necessarily means less violence, contrary to what many intervention advocates believe.”

Grigoryan, assistant professor of international relations, studies interventions as part of a larger research plan to understand states’ internal politics as functions of their external environments. He is working on a set of papers examining the conditions that contribute to states’ fears of “fifth columns,” as well as a project that links failures of democratic transitions to wars.

A very popular theory in the study of international politics, the so-called democratic peace theory, insists that democratic states do not fight each other because of the liberal norm of peaceful conflict resolution.

“Many states, like my home country of Armenia, that get involved in serious international disputes during periods of democratic transition fail to complete their transitions, which suggests

two interesting hypotheses,” says Grigoryan. “First, democracy may be the consequence of peace and not the other way around. Second, the democratic peace finding may be due to a selection effect, i.e., democracies that would have reasons to fight don’t become democratic in the first place, which implies that the much-hyped democratic peace finding may not even be a particularly interesting one.”

Sociology

Unequal Exchange

Coffee has been cultivated, harvested and exported from less-developed regions for centuries, and the bean continues to be one of the most important commodities on the world market. Coffee follows oil as the second most highly valued product exported by

developing countries, but because it is produced exclusively in poor nations, coffee production creates tremendous ecological, economic and social imbalances, says sociologist Kelly Austin.

Austin, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology, studied the percentage of coffee exports as a ratio of all agricultural exports, assessing a country’s dependence on coffee in particular. Austin found that coffee exports have especially negative ecological, social and physical impacts on developing nations.

“Nations with an increased dependence on coffee exports have high levels of deforestation, increased problems with malnutri-

contribute to household nutrition or health. Communities can’t fall back on it for household consumption. It’s also very labor intensive. Coffee cherries have to be picked by hand, so production tends to pull children and family members out of school.”

Coffee growers reside in less-developed regions of Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, whereas consumption of coffee takes place in Europe, the United States and, increasingly, rapidly developing areas of Asia. Approximately 20 million farmers grow coffee, mostly on small farms, depending on the crop for their livelihoods.

“Even when we control for other agricultural commodities, we have shown that coffee has these especially unique and detrimental effects. What’s ironic is that it’s a luxury crop. It is an agricultural product that doesn’t contribute to relieving hunger in any way.”

In addition to coffee, Austin has looked at the harmful effects of beef and soybean production in developing nations. Dependence on agricultural commodities leads to deforestation and biodiversity loss in bird species, Austin notes. Both of these lead to increased mosquito populations and an increased prevalence of malaria.

The connections between the environment and health are central to Austin’s research. She is now exploring the issues surrounding HIV and gender stratification in developing nations.



Arman Grigoryan argues that Interventions can actually heighten violence against victims.

and innocent civilians, in general, is the consequence of inaction by third parties. If that was the cause, intervention was the obvious cure, or so thought the proponents of that argument. Arman Grigoryan’s research challenges this conventional wisdom, demonstrating that interventions can actually produce intensified violence against the very victims they are supposed to save.

“Intervention threatens to remove the target state’s coercive options, which can be very dangerous,” he says. “Doing so forces the target of intervention into a corner, where it has to choose between capitulation and doing something much more radical, much more drastic, like ethnic cleansing. Some states choose not to capitulate. The relationship between intervention and violence against minorities, in other words, is not a straightforward one where



Coffee picker sorts coffee berries in western El Salvador.

tion and hunger, and lower levels of participation in secondary schooling,” Austin says. “Much of this connects back to the unique features of coffee. Coffee doesn’t

Raised largely overseas,
Capt. Cynthia Izuno Macri '79
brought minority issues to the
highest ranks of the U.S. Navy

Diversity OF Experience

If travel broadens the mind, Cynthia Izuno Macri could (but doesn't) claim to have had a vast intellect by the time she reached Lehigh University as a freshman in 1975. In the United States, she'd lived in Hawaii and Minnesota. Overseas, she'd lived in Egypt, Greece, Mexico and Pakistan. During fourth grade, she evacuated Egypt with her family when the 1967 Six-Day War broke out with Israel. In ninth grade, they evacuated Pakistan when civil war erupted, returning when things settled down with the establishment of an independent Bangladesh. Macri completed her high school education in Islamabad.

"Leaving my family in Pakistan and coming to Lehigh was a huge adjustment," Macri says. "Drinkable water out of a tap was foreign to me. My roommate was a sophisticated New Yorker, while I was essentially a rural Japanese American who'd spent the previous seven years overseas."

But she credits Lehigh for giving her key academic training and opportunities that enabled her life after Lehigh to be as remarkable as her life before. Awarded a Health Professions Scholarship from the U.S. Navy, she attended medical school at Temple University after receiving her bachelor of science degree in biology at Lehigh in 1979, going on to become a gynecological oncologist. In June 2013, Capt. (and Dr.) Macri retired from a 34-year career that culminated with a post as special assistant for diversity to the chief of naval operations—an adviser to a member of the joint chiefs of staff.

by Richard Laliberte



"You don't know what's inside of you unless you put yourself in an environment where it can be developed," Macri says.

Having experienced that process herself helped lead to her work developing Navy programs that expose disadvantaged students to science and medicine in hopes of drawing recruits to the service's health professions from a bigger, more diverse pool.

A WORLD AWAY

Lack of exposure to stimulating environments wasn't one of Macri's problems growing up. Though much of her father's family had been interred in relocation camps during World War II, her father was a plant geneticist teaching at the University of Hawaii at Hilo by the time Macri was born in 1958. Through the Ford Foundation, he worked on crop management at a succession of posts abroad, taking his family with him.

Macri's experience in Pakistan for most of sixth through 12th grade proved especially formative. "We were part of a close-knit international community that was half American," she says. Among the U.S. contingent, "Whether you were someone like my dad, a diplomat or an oil company employee, what mattered was being an American," she says. "Nobody split hairs about what kind of an American you were or where you were from."

In the small international high school (her class totaled 23), she excelled at academics and athletics, especially soccer. "I had 16 varsity letters and made every single team, including table tennis, for crying out loud," she says. Competitors and teammates were often children of military attachés, career diplomats and U.S. government employees and would play against teams composed of the U.S. Marine Corps security guards. "The Marines were the cream of the crop—fit and respectful," Macri says. "They made a huge impression on me."

Lehigh University in 1975

was literally a world away. "The campus was 1.7-percent non-white," she says. "There were very few Asians." In a larger community of bright students, she was no longer top of her class. "My SATs were marginal," she says. "I struggled academically the entire way through college." An athletic system in which students typically specialize in one sport at a time took her by surprise. "There were more Lehigh players dressed for a football game than there were students in my entire high school," she recalls.

And in the early days of Title IX, nobody told her that the signs she saw for soccer tryouts were for what was presumed to be an all-men's team. "On the ride over, I realized there were no other women on the bus," she says. But she continued attending practices and made the team. In 1977, she became a founding member of the Lehigh women's soccer program, acting as a player-coach. "We were a bit out there on our own and spent time arranging schedules with any other school that had a women's club," she says. "It was really, really fun."

EDUCATION and OPPORTUNITY

As her undergraduate education neared an end, Macri went after two goals: to be a doctor and—inspired by the security guards she'd known in Pakistan—a Marine. Navy doctors provide medical care for the Corps, so she signed on with the Navy and its medical scholarship. Despite what she took to be so-so grades, she was accepted into medical school because of Lehigh's reputation for academic rigor.

In the Navy, she again found herself in a challenging environment that could bring out her best. "Like most people who sign up, I only intended to stay four years," she says. "But the Navy provides opportunities to explore different interests and puts people in higher positions at a younger age than in the civilian world."

A string of responsibilities kept her in jobs she loved—such as working with cancer patients and teaching Navy medical trainees. Through positions such as director of the OB/GYN residency program at the National Naval Medical Center and vice president

of recruitment and diversity at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, both in Bethesda, Md., she discovered she liked administration while taking note of trends in which she had a personal interest. "I found a striking lack of diversity in candidates for medical school and wondered why," she says. "There are plenty of women and minorities, so the problem isn't numbers. It's that segments of these populations don't receive enough of the right advice and preparation to enter competitive colleges."

Macri began developing a summer biomedical science program to target promising middle school and high school students who might not otherwise be steered toward health professions. From a pilot course in Maryland, the program has been introduced to a variety of locations around the country since 2004, often with help from local community partnerships. In addition to multiple locations in Maryland, sites have included McAllen, Texas; Jacksonville, Fla.; Los Angeles; Philadelphia; Chicago; two locations in Hawaii; and military sites such as Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Okinawa, Japan.

"As an assistant to the chief of naval operations, I was able to push the diversity issue at a high level," Macri says. "It was my job to make recommendations to my boss about where the Navy should have visibility and

"You don't know what's inside of you unless you put yourself in an environment where it can be developed."

how he can reinforce these efforts." With retirement in the Navy mandatory at 30 years of commissioned service, Macri is now looking to transfer her passion and experience into diversity-oriented education in civilian life.

She'll also have time to connect more with her husband, another retired Navy physician, and her 23-year-old daughter, who, like her mother, is familiar with the globe-trotting that can come with occasional service overseas. Says Macri: "She grew up understanding that our family had a different calling." ●

Africana Studies

Ascendant

by JACK CROFT

Kwame Essien doesn't just teach about the African diaspora. He's lived it.

A native of Ghana, Essien came to the United States two decades ago to embark on a personal journey of scholarship that has led him to the faculty of Lehigh's Africana Studies program. The seeds of that journey were planted in family stories he heard from his mother growing up about the slave trade in Ghana and how a distant ancestor, a great chief, had been involved.

"There was something about that story that shaped my own interest in slavery," Essien says.

He had been trained to be an architect in Ghana but gave that up to pursue his dream in America. He worked jobs that allowed him the time to pursue his studies—driving a school bus, making donuts at Krispy Kreme, delivering the *Wall Street Journal*—as he earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro; his master's from the University of Illinois; and his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

The assistant professor of history, who just completed his first year at Lehigh, shares his personal story as part of his teaching, and

his studies include the comparative histories of slavery, liberated Afro-Brazilian slaves who returned to Ghana in the 1830s—what he calls "the African diaspora in reverse"—and race and cultures in Africa.

He is the first in a cluster of faculty hires for Africana Studies that has "brought in some of the most versatile, diverse and intellectually engaging scholars that we were able to recruit to Lehigh," says James Peterson, director of the program.

Joining Essien in the fall semester are Monica Miller, a religion studies scholar who focuses on youth culture throughout the diaspora and African American religious practices; Susan Kart, an art historian who studies 20th-century

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The Africana Studies Program prompts in Lehigh students an appreciation of the life and culture of people of African descent worldwide. Africana Studies expands Lehigh students' critical understanding of their own heritage in interaction with other cultures.



embedded in Lehigh's strategic plan. That process, Peterson concedes, is time consuming and painstaking, requiring negotiations with more than one department because each faculty member hired has shared responsibilities.

"What I would argue is that the payoff is worth it," Peterson says. "Because what we've done through the Africana Studies cluster hiring process is we've built lifelong relationships with departments that we previously didn't have."

A Patchwork Beginning

What became Africana Studies was born of the tumult of the 1960s, largely in response to demands from African American students and faculty that the experiences and history of African Americans be included in what was being taught and studied on college campuses.

"This was a battleground time in the field," recalls Scott, who at the time was in graduate school at Princeton University, studying African and African American history.

"It was an incredibly hard struggle to get the programs instituted, in the sense of being formalized, on these campuses," he says. "In addition to being a student, I was also a part of the protests for recognition of the field at Princeton. Other students were doing the same thing elsewhere as well. You might be involved in the taking over of a building in the morning and going to a seminar to present a paper in the afternoon."

The movement to create what initially was known as Black Studies or African American Studies was inseparable from the civil rights movement, the protests against the Vietnam War and the "urban insurrections" taking place in American cities, Scott says.



Senegalese visual art; and Darius Williams, a theatre scholar, teacher and performer whose research focuses on 20th-century African American theatre, in particular black, gay youth dramatic culture in the South.

In addition, Terrance Wiley will join the Africana Studies and Religion Studies faculty in fall 2014 to, as Peterson puts it, "chair and hopefully reinvigorate the Peace Studies program."

After years of what former Africana Studies director William Scott candidly calls "stagnation," Lehigh's Africana Studies program is clearly on the move, just as it is getting ready to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its founding.

"There are no other Africana Studies programs growing like ours is at the moment," Peterson says.

And it has made Lehigh a highly attractive destination for the best and brightest young scholars.

"There is no better place, I would say, for any young scholar like me to get a job like this in the 21st century than at Lehigh," Essien says.

The program's current growth is made possible by the cluster hiring approach

"The students who were agitating for African American Studies were committed to viable, intellectual endeavors," he says. "But they saw themselves as an arm of what was also happening in inner-city streets at that time. They really saw themselves as an extension of the broad protest for justice in the country."

In the decades since, Black Studies programs have evolved into Africana Studies, to encompass the whole of the African diaspora, and developed from programs into academic departments at universities and colleges across the land. Lehigh, however, was hardly in the vanguard of that movement.

In 1992, the university brought in Scott—who previously had been the founding chair of Black Studies departments at Wellesley College in Massachusetts and Oberlin College in Ohio—to direct its fledgling African American Studies program. The current program was officially launched in the fall of 1992.



As the director of Africana Studies, James Peterson (left) is challenging his colleagues to shape the national dialogue in the field of Africana Studies.



what we could do under the circumstances and kept hope alive that things would improve.”

They did. In 2007, then-College of Arts and Sciences Dean Anne Meltzer approved a two-year predoctoral/postdoc fellows program for Africana Studies. Scott, having shepherded the program to that point, felt it was a good time to return to his research in black religious history in 18th-century America, and Morgan was tapped to serve as interim director. From fall 2009 to summer 2010, three external Africana Studies experts were brought in to review the program and its needs.

The cluster hiring proposal was developed starting in fall 2010, made the cut for the final round of seven proposals in January 2011 and was approved in April 2011. During that time, Morgan led the search for a new director that resulted in Peterson’s hiring at the end of April 2011.

“The success of the cluster hire process was, in my view, *the key* to the resurgence, growth and new energy in the program,” Morgan says.

A New Direction

Peterson, an associate professor of English in addition to directing the Africana Studies program, came to Lehigh from Bucknell University and previously served as an assistant professor of English at Penn State University – Abington.

While Peterson says he was attracted by Lehigh’s reputation and location, “the deciding factor for me was understanding that this was an opportunity for me to both reinvigorate and also build the Africana Studies program at Lehigh University. There are going to be very, very few times, if any, in your lifetime where you will be hired with the opportunity to participate in the process of hiring your own core group.”

In the past, faculty from other departments—such as Kashi Johnson in theatre, Berrisford Boothe in art and Seth Moglen in English, among others—essentially donated their time to teach in Africana Studies, Peterson says. “All of these hires are different in the sense that they’re 50-percent Africana Studies, which means we have a core group of young scholars who are officially contributing their academic and professional time to the Africana Studies program.”

“It was really cobbled together with those faculty currently on campus who taught something related to African American Studies,” recalls Ted Morgan, University Distinguished Professor of political science who chaired the search committee that led to Scott’s hiring.

Morgan, much of whose life’s work has focused on the civil rights era and social movements of the 1960s that gave birth to Africana Studies, has been an advocate for the program and diversity at Lehigh for more than two decades. Any attempt to develop a true understanding of American and world history, he says, would be “really deficient if it does not incorporate the contributions and the cultures of the African diaspora.”

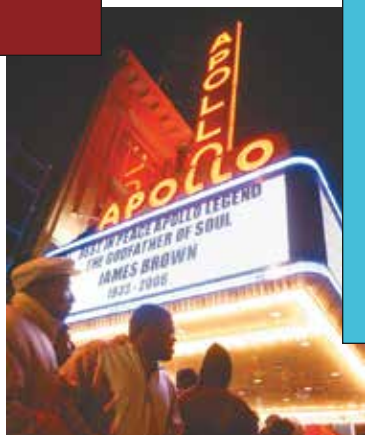
The program also plays an important role in the university’s diversity efforts, helping to increase the representation of students and faculty of color while enriching Lehigh’s campus culture, Morgan says.

By the mid-1990s, under Scott’s leadership, African American Studies at Lehigh reached a milestone when a major was created. But the program still relied on faculty from other departments, supplemented with adjunct faculty, to sustain it.

Lack of available resources, coupled with the departures of President Peter Likins and Provost Al Pence, who hired Scott and initially championed the program, led to years of “not making significant progress,” Scott says. But a core group of faculty in history, sociology, political science and English, among other departments, kept the program alive.

“We were covering an extremely small slice of the black experience,” Scott says. “But we did

“There is no better place, I would say, for any young scholar like me to get a job like this in the 21st century than at Lehigh.”



BRADLEY SMITH/CORBIS; DOUGLAS BENEDETTO; GETTY IMAGES; GETTY IMAGES; KEITH BEDFORD/REUTERS/CORBIS; JULIO DONOSO/STYMA/CORBIS

Peterson says building the program “has been a collaborative effort from beginning to end” and credits Donald E. Hall, current dean, and Sherry Buss, in the Office of Interdisciplinary Programs, with helping the program advance.

Africana Studies is now the hub “of some of the most exciting intellectual work being done in the college. James has built a world-class program in very short order,” says Hall.

Peterson plans a multi-pronged approach to continue building the program. First is to retain the bright young scholars hired through the cluster process. Second is to cultivate their research, making sure they have time and support to pursue scholarship along with their academic responsibilities. Third is to draw on the knowledge of those who have built the program and kept it going over the years—including Scott, Morgan, Moglen, Betsy Fifer, Rick Matthews and others—to ensure that it is passed on to new generations of Lehigh scholars.

And then there’s what Peterson calls his “secret weapon”—media relations. Since arriving at Lehigh, Peterson has been a frequent guest, offering his expertise on popular culture, urban youth and politics, on national news networks, including Al-Jazeera English, CBS News and MSNBC, as well as on various local television networks. He blogs for the Huffington Post and has published his scholarly work in *Callaloo*, *Criticism*, *Black Arts Quarterly* and *African American Review*.

“I want us to be one of the most media-savvy Africana Studies programs in the nation,” he says.

“My media work is very, very important to the community I come from. I’m from

inner-city Newark, N.J. I come from a neighborhood and a community where education is the greatest pathway to transcending your circumstances. For my entire life, I’ve been committed to giving back and working with my own community.

“We need to do our academic work, and we need to make sure we’re publishing in academic journals and publishing monographs with academic university presses. But I am also going to challenge my colleagues to join me in contributing to the public discourse because that, to me, is an important service of Africana Studies.”

His long-term vision is that, 10 years down the line, Lehigh will have been able to retain the young scholars the university has hired and that Africana Studies will be an academic department with as many majors and Study Abroad opportunities as Global Studies now offers.

He also hopes that “our faculty will have a significant footprint in the community of Bethlehem and in the surrounding communities of the Lehigh Valley, but also on the national scene; that the work that we’re doing will have impact on the public discourses as well as the academic discourses for the foreseeable future.” ●

New Faces

Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences are as diverse as the scholarship they produce. Several new faces join the college this fall as part of the Africana Studies program, and these new arrivals bring a wealth of experience to add to the campus teaching culture.

Monica R. Miller, assistant professor of religion studies, specializes in studies of religion, popular culture, youth subcultures and various dimensions of material culture. Miller’s research also pays particular attention to theory and method in the study of religion and examines the uses, effects, rhetoric, constructions, deployments and practices of religion and constructions of meaning across various mediums of material culture specific to socially marginalized populations. This includes attention to cultural practices that often go unnoticed due to social stigma and stratification as a way to examine shifting conceptions and uses of the religious among marginalized groups. Miller is co-editor and contributor of a 2009 special issue of *Culture & Religion Review Journal* on hip hop and religion. She is the author of *Religion and Hip Hop* and is currently working on two manuscripts on hip hop culture and religion.

Susan Kart, assistant professor of art, architecture and design, specializes in 20th-century African art, arts of the African diaspora, Islamic arts in Africa and colonial-period African art. Her primary research is based in Senegal, West Africa. She had been published in *Critical Interventions*, *African Studies Review* and *H-Net* for African art. Additional academic interests include pre-Columbian and Latin American art.

Darius Williams, assistant professor of theatre, joins Lehigh after receiving his Ph.D. from Ohio State University. Williams specializes in the African diaspora and African American theatre. His research examines how The Negro Ensemble Company reconstructed and reframed the Black American experience on stage.

Nadia Sasso '14G brings a personal connection to her exploration of the culture and identity of African immigrants

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE THROUGH A NEW LENS

BY TRICIA LONG '12G

NADIA SASSO '14G and her childhood friends traveled together once a year, reconnecting, relaxing and enjoying one another's company. As busy college students, their time together was meaningful in and of itself, but on one particular trip in 2010, their shared experiences took on new meaning.

Sasso and her friends Marie Mansaray and Zainab Fadlu Dean are all American-born children of immigrants from Sierra Leone. A long civil war over politics and diamonds has left this West African country one of the poorest and most poverty-stricken nations in the world. For Sasso and her friends, the country's plight was so far from their American upbringing, yet so close to their hearts.

Together, the friends set out to give back to their families' homeland. They formed Yehri Wi Cry, or hear our cry, to improve maternal and infant mortality in the West African nation. The organization provides birthing kits and incentive packages to help improve childbirth in facilities where the quality of care is inadequate.

"Even if you're not born in the country, you don't have to be rich to give back," says Sasso of the nonprofit. "We're setting the example of what people can do if they put their resources together."

Sasso's commitment to improving the quality of life for women and children in Sierra Leone spurred The Katie Couric Show to name her to

the Next Generation of Female Leaders, a short list of women-led organizations that are helping empower women globally.

"You're raised to think about others. How can you impact change? If I see something wrong, I think of a solution," she says. "If I find others who don't understand or look like me, I find how I can engage others and help them understand. You can't hold the weight of the world in your hands. But I do push myself a lot, and that's what you have to do sometimes."

EXPLORING AN IN-BETWEEN PLACE

That drive and compassion also influence her work at Lehigh. As a graduate student in American Studies, she is exploring the culture and identity of African immigrants.

Sasso's mother arrived in the United States at age 12, and her father arrived as a student in 1986.

"They fall under the guise of African American, but they're not really. It's very unique because you have a sense of culture unlike other African Americans. I was taught to be very communal and think very little about myself. Being part of America, you're forced to learn to be more of an individual."

“I’m able to build more media-related skills, so I can not only write, but keep up with the digital age and tell stories in a different way.”

Sasso says that immigrants, like her parents, are in an “in-between place.” Exploring what that place means for an immigrant’s culture and sense of identity will guide her research and thesis work.

Through independent study and coursework, Sasso is reading and learning about the African immigrant experience and how teens respond to moving to the United States. She works closely with James Peterson, director of Africana Studies and associate professor of English, with whom she studied as an undergraduate student at Bucknell University.

“That was a big influence on me coming to Lehigh,” she says of Peterson. “This is a great way to continue under his guidance.”

TRANSLATING A VISION

Sasso took a hiatus before attending graduate school in order to try her hand at the corporate world. After graduating from Bucknell in 2011, she relocated to Los Angeles to work in media and marketing analysis for The Nielson Company and corporate communications for Disney Consumer Products. Her experience in corporate media and communications helps her translate her vision and communicate the mission of her nonprofit.

“Our biggest challenge is learning how to engage people in Sierra Leone on the topic at hand,” she says of her organization. “We don’t necessarily like asking for money, but we do seek out cultural exchange or learning opportunities. We want you to learn more.”

Sasso saw graduate school as an opportunity not only to expand her knowledge of a subject matter, but to also expand her communications skills so that she can disseminate that knowledge.

“Coming to Lehigh, American Studies offered the closest program to an open-ended media concentration,” she says. “I’m able to build more media-related skills, so I can not only write, but keep up with the digital age and tell stories in a different way.”

To do so, Sasso is pursuing Lehigh’s graduate certificate in documentary film as part of her degree. The certificate program, which was launched through the American Studies program in 2012, is designed to augment social science and humanities students’ education and training.

Sasso plans to write a master’s thesis and produce a documentary film to complete her degree requirements. Her film will follow the path of five women who were born in the United States but chose to migrate home to their families’ native countries of Sierra Leone and Ghana. She will also profile successful women who were born in Sierra Leone and moved to the United States. For all of these women, Sasso’s curiosity lies in the creation of identity as part of that immigrant experience—the same curiosity she had about her family’s experience.

RETURNING ‘HOME’

A Strohl Graduate Summer Research Fellowship, awarded to Sasso by the College of Arts and Sciences, enabled her to travel to Sierra Leone and Ghana in July to conduct interviews for the film.

Sasso is at ease in Sierra Leone, which still surprises her family. “I think they’re happy that I’m embracing it,” she says. “I think they never thought in their wildest dreams that I’d be so involved. It’s still a developing country, and they’re surprised how I’m able to maneuver and move through it. I’ve been sheltered by a lot.”

After graduating from Lehigh, Sasso says she hopes to take her nonprofit to the next level, perhaps by moving to Sierra Leone for a year. She’s also considered turning her documentary into a series.

“I think at graduation, I’ll have another great story to tell.” ●

RYAN HULVAT, OLIVER POLEY/CORBIS



A mother and her newborn baby at a health center in Freetown, Sierra Leone

Putting More HUMANITY into the HUMANITIES

EDURNE PORTELA celebrated the 10th anniversary of Lehigh's Humanities Center (HC) by doing something relatively radical. The HC director paired junior faculty members with senior faculty members outside their departments. Then she instructed everyone to read something written by their partner and present a paper about their new colleague's recent research, brokering collaborations between scholars who often times don't have the opportunity to communicate with each other.

Novel matchmaking is one of many ways that Portela has made the HC a more challenging, yet comfortable forum/laboratory. Over five years she has moderated a wide range of visiting scholars discussing a wide range of intriguing topics. She has empowered new research projects with new research grants and promoted interdisciplinary endeavors with tenacity and courtesy. Simply put, she has made the humanities more relevant by making them more humane.

One of Portela's colleagues is Mary Foltz, assistant professor of English who has written extensively about the literature of waste.

"Eduarne inspires deep and profound conversation that bridges disciplinary divides," says Foltz, who shared a 10th-anniversary presentation about decomposition with Gordon Bearn, professor of philosophy. "She brings a sense of play to our work together, a joyous intellectual engagement."

Portela felt at home in the HC's old house on a Packer Avenue hill long before the HC became her administrative home. In 2003, the year the native of Spain began teaching Spanish at Lehigh, she was invited by Bearn, the center's founding director, to participate in a visit by Lourdes Portillo, the Mexican-American

Director Eduarne Portela
has made the
Humanities Center a
model forum/laboratory for
interdisciplinary projects



BY GEOFF GEHMAN '89 M.A.

director of a film about hundreds of young women kidnapped and killed after crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Five years later Portela took a more active role as a member of the HC advisory board. She sponsored author Nora Strejilevich's talk about her persecution by Argentina's military junta. Strejilevich stars in Portela's 2009 book *Displaced Memories*, a study of how tortured Argentine female writers turned trauma into narrative.

Portela was nervous at first accepting the new role. Not only was it her first job as an academic administrator, she admits she was "scared" by the prospect of reaching the high standards of Bearn and his HC successor, Seth Moglen, associate professor of English who directs Lehigh's South Side Initiative. She was particularly impressed and intimidated by their supervision of yearlong series about substantial themes, such as "Just Globalization" and "Waste."

Portela has extended the HC tradition of provocative programs starring high-profile

authorities. Last year she scheduled a talk by iconic art critic Dore Ashton, a pivotal writer about abstract expressionism. Working with Bearn, Moglen and other advisors, she coordinated a 2012 symposium on the "political visions" of immigration, hunger and other global crises. In 2012-13 she monitored "Movement," a series of nine guest lectures on topics as diverse as the '70s gay-liberation crusade and protecting the Mexico-U.S. border.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

As HC director, Portela has pushed academic borders by stretching financial horizons. Lehigh teachers have explored new territories armed with annual research grants she secured. Suzanne Edwards, assistant professor of English, used her HC money to pay visiting scholars who discussed their cross-disciplinary projects. Nicholas Sawicki, assistant professor of modern and contemporary art history, used his funds to visit Prague, where he studied the archived letters and diaries of prominent Czech visual artists. At the HC, he described his unusual portrait of Czech painters depicting World War I not in images, but in words.

The HC "was a natural place for sharing my findings, a great venue for trying out and getting feedback on new ideas," says Sawicki, a member of the center's advisory board. "That has a lot to do with Eduarne's leadership and with the remarkable climate of generosity and openness that she has fostered."

The child of a former restaurant owner, Portela knows that conversations about intellectual freedom go down better with free meals. She makes sure that complimentary soup is served during the HC's one-hour forums,

which are open to anyone who wants to discuss scholarly work in progress. She uses power lunches to pick the brains of guest speakers before they speak, to match them with Lehigh teachers, to persuade them to join seminars.

This eclectic menu has especially nourished Nitzan Lebovic, assistant professor of history. An expert on biopolitical films, he's lectured at the HC on Michael Haneke's "The White Ribbon," a fictional account of a German village terrorized by authority figures, including a pastor, just before World War I. Through the center he's met people like Erin Manning, a philosopher, visual artist and dancer who gave a "Movement" talk on choreography as mobile architecture.

Lebovic used an HC grant to fund a seminar by anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler, a scholar outside his field. Stoler led a three-day discussion of her then-unfinished book, a collection of essays on "imperial ruins and ruination"—everything from Cold War images of the United States leveled by nuclear weapons to Indian villages submerged during the building of a dam.

Lebovic regards himself as a foreign foreigner, an Israeli at an American university who believes in critique as an ideology, including the critique of his own identity.

"I know what it's like to take a radical stand, so I appreciate Edurne's courage," says the Apter chair of Holocaust studies and ethical values. "She is one of the most open-minded, curious, innovative people in academia I know. She's made the HC the kind of place one seeks in the interdisciplinary field: challenging, yet comforting."

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Portela has also significantly shaped graduate students. Devin Donovan '13, recipient of a doctorate in English, considers the HC director a rare blend of role model and mentor. A former HC board member, he admires her ability to make meetings efficient, enlightening and even enjoyable. Portela, he says, not only helped him view his work from new angles, she helped him value his work. He calls the HC a stimulating sanctuary, "where everyone is encouraged to put their guards down for a second and challenge themselves, intellectually and personally."

Sawicki notes that Portela possesses an ability to help teachers make their projects

more germane to colleagues outside their fields. She helps make the humanities more relevant at Lehigh with a persistent promotion of the work undertaken by her colleagues and by the center. Under her direction the HC has strengthened the services that most humanities departments can't provide—namely, interdisciplinary research and feedback about unfinished projects. Due to her commitment, the center has become a centerpiece of interdisciplinary discussion at Lehigh addressing relevant issues and events, he adds.

"We're at a point right now where every week there seems to be a story in the national press about the 'crisis' of the humanities, calling the continued relevance of a humanistic education into question," says Sawicki. "It feels incredibly important at a time like this for the Humanities Center to have a determined leadership."

Portela says the HC has changed her as much as she's changed the HC. Juggling so many jobs, she insists, has trained her to become a more patient teacher, a more probing scholar, a better listener. She applies these skills to a Spanish literature/film organization

she co-founded and a book she's preparing about writers and filmmakers who address, and redress, indifference to violence in Spain's Basque country. Portela has done everything at the HC except present a portion of her Basque project. For years she's been concerned about "contaminating" the center with her "personal interests." She plans to break her vow in 2013-14. She's scheduled a lecture on Basque nationalism and violence by anthropologist Joseba Zulaika, former director of a renowned American center for Basque studies. She may even excerpt her own Basque study, which is financed by a two-year, \$10,000 New Directions Fellowship from Lehigh's College of Arts and Sciences.

Portela envisions the HC as a true research center. Her goals range from the profound (establishing an endowment) to the mundane (renovating the kitchen). No matter what the outcome, she plans to continue running the center as a challenging, but comfortable home.

"I think I sound too positive for an academic," she says, "but everybody who knows me knows I love the HC." ●



the Citizen Architect

*Elise Braceras Stone '81
is highly regarded for her
fresh takes on historic
styles in an historic town*

by Geoff Gehman '89 M.A.



It was two weeks before Christmas and Elise Braceras Stone '81 heard the words an architect hates to hear. A client insisted that Stone's house addition was "entirely in the wrong place." The woman wanted it moved, even though it was already framed, even though moving it would be an expensive headache.

Saner heads prevailed. The client's husband insisted the addition had to stay put. Stone altered elements to make the unhappy woman "happier." The architect even turned a negative into a positive. She vowed to offer future clients "a ton" of design options up-front, so they would be less likely to demand changes later.

Eighteen years later, Stone still helps house owners decide what they need and don't need. After more than 500 additions, renovations and new houses, she's earned a strong reputation as a residential architect and part-time family psychologist, social engineer and history-minded citizen. She's well known in the Colonial town of Concord, Mass., where she lives, coaches tennis and chairs the

planning board, for her contemporary, family-friendly homes.

Stone grew up Elise Braceras in Caldwell, N.J., which she remembers as an architectural vacuum. The child of a pharmaceutical marketing executive from Argentina, she lived in a fairly bland 1940s Dutch Colonial with four brothers, including Geordie Braceras '83. She can't recall a favorite architect; she can't even recall a conversation with an architect. Her primary architectural passion was building toy houses.

Stone found her career path in a 10th-grade art class. Something clicked when a classmate announced his intention to be an architect. "I said right then and there that's what I'm going to do," says Stone. "And I never wavered."

This romance blossomed at Lehigh, where Stone's art, architecture and design faculty stressed style over engineering, bending standards over following rules. "It was such a nurturing place," says Stone, who minored in technical theater and played on the tennis team. "We didn't learn about getting HVAC systems through zoning. We didn't ask: How

did the building stand? It was your time to open your mind and expand your imagination."

The adventures escalated after Stone received a master's degree in architecture from the Catholic University of America. In 1985 she moved to England, partly because her husband, Todd Stone '81, had a new job at IBM, partly because the couple wanted to roam Europe. Elise worked at Scott Brownrigg, a leader in town planning, airport-terminal design and creative employee incentives. Designing office bathrooms, she points out, seemed more fun from the firm's office in a manor house on an English estate. Comparing drafting by hand to drafting by computer was more enjoyable after the mandatory tea break after lunch.

Stone practices this personal, communal approach with her own firm in Concord. She specializes in updating the town's dominant style, New England Colonial. Her Web site features crisp combinations of gables, dormers, beams, porches, thrusting windows and flexing additions—including a twisting tower with a balcony. Her interior spaces are similarly dynamic: living

spaces that double as dining areas, mud rooms that double as children's athletic lockers.

According to Stone, an architect needs to be flexible to handle fickle clients. One of the reasons she offers "a ton" of design options is to help home owners decide what will and won't work. She may tell them that it's better to open up a house instead of adding a family room. Or that installing solar panels may blow their budget. Or that it's not a good idea to enter a \$2 million home through the garage.

including Kelsey Stone '09, who started at Lehigh as an architecture major and ended with a degree in journalism and communication.

"I tell people: I live your life," says Stone. "I know what it means when you say you don't want to carry the groceries 50 feet from the garage to the kitchen. I want to integrate the new with the old. I want to make everything look good and work better. I want to give you a home you can live with and enjoy every day."

Stone's ally is her business partner Linda

century, she's witnessed the rise of energy-efficient designs and the fall of energy-inefficient McMansions. The 2008-09 recession, she says, forced clients to scale back from a dining room to an eating area. Conversely, the 2001 terrorist attacks convinced people to spend more money on and more time in their houses, to create their dream homes 20 years sooner.

Stone is particularly amused by the cycle of taste. "When I grew up, we wanted to hide the kitchen; now the kitchen has to be the heart of



"I want to integrate the new with the old. I want to make everything look good and work better."

"People think they know what they want, but they really don't," says Stone. "They change their mind constantly and have the most difficult time making decisions. One thing Stone won't do is tell clients they're wrong. She refuses to criticize them openly, even if they want to do something silly—like devote half of a new living room to a bathroom/laundry. "You can't say 'absolutely not' because as soon as you say that, they get their hackles up," she says. "And then you risk losing their trust."

Stone builds trust with common sense and the common denominator. She often uses her authority as a neighbor and a parent. She lives in a West Concord house that she built 19 years ago with her husband, who is now CEO of a risk-management software company. She designed an open-plan first floor to accommodate the crisscross lives of their four children,

Brehn, a fellow mother who hails from Montreal and is a realistic idealist.

"Elise is very good at reading the needs of clients," says Brehn, who specializes in kitchen and bath spaces. "She knows how far you can push someone, when you should pull back, when it matters and when it doesn't matter. We both have a huge desire to make everything right all the time, yet we both know how to compromise with integrity."

Brehn points out that Stone is so well known in Concord that she doesn't need to advertise. Nor does she need a fancy Web site. She didn't even hire the designer of www.elise-stonearchitect.com. That job was done secretly by her sister-in-law, who lives near Stone in a house with a Stone-designed addition.

Stone could devote a Web page to her ride on the architectural roller coaster. Over a quarter

the home," she says. "Once upon a time everyone had to have cherry cabinets with black granite; now it's white cabinets, with a color cabinet beneath the island. In the '80s everything was gray. Well, guess what? Gray's back. It's so interesting to me that people want to be so different, yet they often end in the same place."

Stone has mixed feelings about working in the town where she lives. She enjoys meeting clients who thank her for making their house a sanctuary. She doesn't enjoy passing projects she thinks are flawed. A prime example is a kitchen addition where the contractor raised the roof at the client's request, without telling Stone. The move compromised the exterior design, ruining an elegant and balanced solution.

Nevertheless, Stone feels at home—with her designs, her clients, her community, herself. "Architecture is a long haul," she says. "You really have to love it to do it well. I like solving problems; I like to make people's dreams a reality. After 20 years and more than 500 projects, I finally feel like I really know what I'm doing." ●

Putting His Eggs in Different Baskets

*Peter Scott '87 '88 Pursued an Interdisciplinary
Education That Is Still Paying Dividends*

BY DAWN THREN

Many high school students who are college shopping do not have a rock-solid idea of what they want to major in. Peter Scott '87 '88 was one of them until he learned about the interdisciplinary programs offered at Lehigh.

"Even in high school, I always wanted a career in business and knew I would pursue an MBA degree, so, quite frankly, I didn't want an undergraduate degree in business as it

seemed redundant," said the managing director and global head of steel and metals investment banking at Jefferies, LLC. "I wanted to pursue a liberal arts degree for the broad skills it offers, but I didn't want to put aside my interest in science."

When Scott was evaluating colleges, he was looking at both engineering schools and liberal arts colleges and couldn't make up his mind

"I charted my own course, and that opportunity still exists for today's Lehigh students."

which way to go. Then he saw Lehigh's Arts and Engineering program.

"I was drawn to it immediately. It allowed me to have both the broad liberal arts education I wanted and at the same time continue to have the more narrow, technical background of engineering," he says.

Scott's choices have served him well. The successful investment banker advises CEOs and CFOs of steel and metals companies on mergers, acquisitions and divestitures and helps them raise capital in the debt and equity markets to support their businesses.

"When I look back, I can't believe I made those choices as a 17-year-old kid. I remember my parents being excited about the Arts and Engineering program, too—except, of course, for the fifth year of tuition," he says with a laugh.

Through the five-year A & E program, Scott earned a B.A. degree in English in 1987 and then a B.S. degree in industrial engineering a year later. He explains the combination by saying he enjoys literature and writing and thought that industrial engineering would be the most applicable engineering discipline to a career in business. In 1993, he earned an MBA degree in finance from The University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

"With my education, I could have pursued just about any career in business I wanted," he says. "The breadth of my Lehigh education gave me the base from which I was free to choose my path."

Scott keeps the idea of interdisciplinary education in the forefront when providing input as a member of Lehigh's College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advisory Council (DAC). A member since 2006, he says, as a businessman, it is fascinating to have the ability to, in a small way, shape the direction of the College of Arts and Sciences to meet the needs of what employers are looking for in graduates.

"Lehigh has always been incredibly flexible and open to students establishing their own interdisciplinary way," he says, adding that the academic direction that students can take at Lehigh is largely up to their own making. "I charted my own course, and that opportunity still exists for today's Lehigh students."

Lehigh's approach to providing students with the opportunity to pursue a diverse education dates back to founder Asa Packer's original vision. The Arts and Engineering program began more than 60 years ago at a time when other institutions of higher education offered students only one academic path to follow.

Lehigh offers many opportunities for students to tailor their education through programs such as the Integrated Degree in Engineering, Arts and Sciences; Computer Science and Business; the Integrated Business and Engineering program; and pairing an MBA degree with either Engineering or Educational Leadership.

The opening of the STEPS building in 2011 has furthered cross-disciplinary learning. With DAC, Scott was involved in guiding the decisions of the facility's priorities and who should be included in STEPS.

"Prior to STEPS, each discipline in the college was off in its own building, doing its own thing," he says. "One of the major goals for STEPS was to get faculty and students from different disciplines together under the same roof so they could collaborate to find much more creative solutions to the complex problems they were each working on."

"Peter exemplifies everything great about Lehigh and our College of Arts and Sciences," says Donald Hall, Herbert J. and Ann L. Siegel dean of the college. "He is a humanist at heart with deep interests in the sciences, in technical fields and in business. His advocacy for the college has been powerful and crucial for our recent growth and successes."

Because Scott looks back on his Lehigh undergraduate days so favorably, he wants others to have the opportunity to pursue a similar experience. He has established the Peter J. Scott '87 Endowed Scholarship Fund to support CAS students who are planning to study abroad. During his junior year, Scott studied for a semester at Westfield College, a branch of the University of London, and knows the importance of receiving international experience.

"Every day in my work as a banker, cultural issues come into play, even if I don't leave my

office in Manhattan. If a student graduates with international experience, they are far better prepared to address these issues as they arise."

Scott has been helping Lehigh students in other ways, too. He actively recruits for full-time positions at Jefferies, working with Career Services to post openings and internships on LUCIE (Lehigh University's Career Information Exchange).

He welcomes résumés from all majors, explaining, "The issues we work on are not solved by just one approach. While spreadsheets are an important part of what young investment banking analysts do, the employee who is most skilled at spreadsheet analysis doesn't necessarily come up with the best ideas. That's why we like to have employees from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and disciplines at Jefferies."

Working in the financial sector, Scott was influential as a founding board member of the Wall Street Council, Lehigh's affinity group of alumni who work in the industry. He hosted the first event in 2002 that drew about 150 alumni.

On building the council, he says, "The founders of the Wall Street Council recognized that the connections between Lehigh and Wall Street were not as strong as they could have been. We believed that Wall Street professionals and Lehigh students with an interest in finance could both benefit from creating stronger connections in both directions.

"We, as finance professionals, were willing to volunteer our time on campus to benefit the students, and we each also wanted our respective firms to benefit by getting the incredibly well-prepared Lehigh students to come work for us," he says.

Scott values his Lehigh education but equally values the opportunities that the university gave him outside of the classroom. Reflecting on his time as president of the Kappa Sigma fraternity and playing on Lehigh's varsity ice hockey team, Scott says, "Everything that Lehigh has to offer helps to create well-rounded graduates. For me it was ice hockey and my fraternity, but for others it might have been the performing arts, volunteer work or the *Brown & White*.

"The opportunity I had to pursue an interdisciplinary major, play intercollegiate athletics and take on a leadership role in my fraternity brought me skills and experiences that I carry with me and benefit from to this day, and for that I am forever indebted to Lehigh." ●

Getting the Most of a Lehigh Education

Global interests help Maria Theresa Mejia '14 become global citizen

by Kathleen Bittner

One of the advantages of a liberal arts education is the ability to find innovative paths and change course with new interests. Maria Theresa Mejia thought she would find a perfect fit as an environmental science major when she arrived at Lehigh, given her interests in

global warming, climate change and how people are affected by these phenomena. Yet Mejia discovered the global studies program, and her path headed in a life-changing direction.

Soon after beginning her coursework, Mejia began to realize and

question her role as a global citizen. Her international education began with her acceptance into the global citizenship program during the fall semester of her first year. In 2011, she traveled with the program to China, eager to see the world with a more holistic view of culture, religion and politics. There, Mejia and her peers were able to use the knowledge they had acquired in the classroom and put it into action as they interacted with immigrant workers, visited water villages and worked with an elderly community service program.

"Traveling to Shanghai and putting into context what we had learned in the classroom was a great growing experience for me," said Mejia. "This helped me realize how much I have learned and have yet to learn about the world around me."

The following year, Mejia immersed herself in both Indonesian culture and Kosovar society. With the aid of a Strohl Grant, Mejia traveled to Indonesia as part of the US-Indonesia Partnership Program (USIPP). The USIPP Consortium, founded by 12 universities in the U.S. and Indonesia, is committed to increasing relationships and scholarship between higher education institutions in the two nations. Joining three other American students, Mejia lived and traveled with four Indonesian counterparts, discussing culture, religion, government and other topics. Each of the students was able to truly share cultural, political, religious, and economic ideas and beliefs while living in one another's homelands, Mejia said.

"The time in Indonesia spent with our counterparts was the ultimate time to ask questions that you might not necessarily bring up in everyday conversation," she said. "While USIPP was definitely not an easy program, I know that it was a life-changing experience that I will continue to learn from beyond my Lehigh years."

Immediately upon her return from Indonesia, Mejia flew to Kosovo on

an Iacocca International Internship. As an intern, she participated in the American Councils' mission to provide higher education programs for Kosovar-Albanians. While in Kosovo, Mejia lived with a host family and worked in a four-person fundraising office raising funds, attending meetings and communicating with the American Councils' U.S. office in Washington, D.C.

"My internship in Kosovo marked the first time I traveled alone and is definitely one that I will never forget," said Mejia. "Despite traveling by myself in a country that I knew little about, I adapted quickly and integrated with my new, third home country. I was welcomed into my host family and in the workplace with the American Councils team."

Pursuing a dual degree in global studies and women, gender and sexuality studies, she is now giving back to the Lehigh community. This past spring, through an internship at Lehigh's Women's Center, Mejia helped to organize, in conjunction with Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley, the Clothesline Project, which strives to increase awareness of violence against women, one of the many global issues on which Mejia is focusing. Gaining experience in education, Mejia also participates in the Prison Project at the Easton correctional facility where she tutors inmates on GED courses.

Now in her fourth year, Mejia continues her understanding of sociological patterns and gender inequality, both globally and in her own community. She has aspirations to continue her education and pursue a master's degree in sociology.

"I believe that the most important lesson that continues to resonate throughout my abroad experiences is that exploring cultures and traveling is uncomfortable—traveling means going beyond your familiar and comfortable environment," reflected Mejia. "However, it is how I choose to act and react to this uncomfortable feeling that matters."





A Celebration of Harmony

by Robert Nichols

Led by dragons and blessed by a wizard, an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural project that joined faculty, staff and students with members of the Southside community culminated with the dedication of the Chinese-Heting Harmony Pavilion on April 20.

"We are dedicating this pavilion to the people of Bethlehem," said Norman Girardot, university distinguished professor of religion studies and one of the leaders of the project.

"Historically, Chinese pavilions have been viewed as places of rest, reflection, cultural-artistic interaction and social recreation. It is in this spirit that we hope that the

Harmony Pavilion will help to make Bethlehem's Greenway a vital lifeline of community cooperation and spirit."

Opening with a procession of Chinese dragons, the event was "magically officiated" by The Wizard of New Zealand with assistance from Wayne the Journeyman Wizard of Richmond. Bethlehem-based participants included Touchstone Theatre, Holy Infancy School, the Litzenberger House and Earth Day.

The pavilion represents the culmination of two grants from the Luce Foundation, intended to promote American student awareness of China through interdisciplinary bridging programs that link technical and liberal arts perspectives, enhance Chinese studies at Lehigh and foster global awareness through summer travel and study in China.

This pavilion exemplifies Lehigh and the College of Arts and Sciences in a couple of ways, said Donald E. Hall, Herbert and Ann Siegel Dean of the College.

"It was a truly interdisciplinary effort that brought together people from language studies, the arts, history, religion studies and engineering. The pavilion celebrates the power of dialogue, of harmonious conversation. It creates dialogue between peoples, encouraging them to speak across differences, to celebrate what is unique but also to understand where other people are coming from. This structure stands for what is best at Lehigh and what is best about the city of Bethlehem."

Yin and Yang

The Harmony Pavilion was designed and built by an interdisciplinary team of Lehigh students. Located on Bethlehem's Southside Greenway, the pavilion was built by Lehigh students under the guidance of Marcus Brandt, master craftsman; Christine Ussler, a professor of practice in the department of art, architecture and design; Wang Dongning, a research scholar in

the department of modern languages and literatures; and Girardot.

"This old, abandoned rail line that once separated parts of South Bethlehem has become a common thread that unites Lehigh University with the community that unites neighborhoods together and unites the commercial district with the residential area," said John Callahan, mayor of Bethlehem.

"In Chinese philosophy the concept of Yin and Yang represent how opposite forces interconnect and create a sense of harmony. The Harmony Pavilion will forever stand as a symbol of harmony here in the city of Bethlehem. It's appropriate that it's located on the South Bethlehem Greenway, because imagine a walking trail through one of the most densely populated areas in the Lehigh Valley. That is a perfect example of Yin and Yang."

The structure makes use of techniques modeled on traditional forms of Chinese carpentry that employ puzzle-like corner brackets and an intricate vaulted roof design. The tiles on the pavilion are authentic pavilion and temple tiles from China. Throughout the process, students worked closely with the city, neighborhood groups



and civic organizations to ensure community interests were heard.

"This is a tribute to the entire community that supported this project," said Girardot. "It exposed many students to this incredible network of people who helped elevate it into a life-altering event. It's a wonderful, lasting manifestation of the spirit of cooperation with our neighbors."

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*"The opportunity
I had to pursue an
interdisciplinary major,
play intercollegiate
athletics and take on a
leadership role in my
fraternity brought me
skills and experiences
that I carry with me
and benefit from to
this day, and for that
I am forever indebted
to Lehigh."* see page 24

